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FM AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0026
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0379
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 1057
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 0094
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA PRIORITY 2207
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0109
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 0106
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0177
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMUSKOREA SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 OSAKA KOBE 000088

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL FOR YURI KIM
AMEMBASSY SEOUL FOR JAMES WAYMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#) [KS](#)

SUBJECT: TAKESHIMA DAY: THE VIEW FROM SHIMANE PREFECTURE

REF: TOKYO 00925

SHIMANE'S MISCALCULATION

1. (SBU) February 22 was the first time Shimane Prefecture celebrated Takeshima Day after enacting a controversial ordinance in 2005. A contact confided that the prefectural assembly made a gross miscalculation about the Takeshima Day ordinance. Meant more as a means of exerting pressure on the GOJ, no one in the prefectural government foresaw the reaction this would have in South Korea, according to International Affairs Director Satoshi Nakajima. But now that the ordinance had passed, the prefectural assembly could not back down and repeal it. They felt forced to carry out the celebrations, even though they realize now how it could further set back Japanese-Korean relations.

2. (SBU) Nakajima was happy to report that the first Takeshima Day was "not as bad as last year" in the fallout over the ordinance. 250 riot police kept watch over events. The right wingers who led vocal demonstrations against the ROK last year were present, but quiet. A delegation of city assembly members from Seoul who tried to protest inside the prefectural government building delivered a protest letter but were denied permission to pass out leaflets.

WHY NOW: HISTORY AND ECONOMICS

3. (SBU) Shimane Prefecture claims the Takeshima Islands (Tokdo in Korean) as part of its territory. The purposes of Takeshima Day, according to the ordinance, are to promote early reestablishment of Shimane's territorial rights over the Takeshima islands and to enlighten public opinion throughout the country and prefecture about Takeshima. This will be an annual event held each February 22. Perhaps ignorant of the negative colonial context (reftel), Director General of Shimane Prefecture's Environment and Life Department Katsuhiro Inoue said that the 100th anniversary of Takeshima being officially designated part of Shimane gave the prefecture an additional impetus to create the ordinance.

¶4. (SBU) Although the talk is all about territory and the historical injustice of Syngman Rhee,s detention, and later expulsion and some deaths, of Shimane fishermen from the island over 50 years ago, the real issue for the prefecture is fishing rights. The area between Honshu and the islands is a rich fishing ground for the prefecture,s fishing industry. Given Shimane,s lack of jobs, isolation from even regional centers such as Hiroshima or Kobe, and poor economic performance, the fishing industry has political clout.

¶5. (SBU) Inoue recounted how Shimane appealed to MOFA every year for decades to get the ministry to assert its territorial rights over the islands so that it could fish in the area. Although the two countries reached an agreement on shared fishing rights, Inoue said that the ROKG was not honoring the terms of the agreement. Worried that people would soon forget about Shimane,s claim to the territory, and ignored by MOFA, the prefecture decided to take matters into its own hands last year. Inoue also added that he was concerned that China was watching the Takeshima issue closely, and might decide to follow the Korean example of &actual occupation8 in the Senkakus if the GOJ did not take action. COMMENT: Clearly, the Takeshima issue is far more visceral to residents of Shimane than in far-off Tokyo. END COMMENT.

¶6. (SBU) Inoue did not stray from his rosy description of current prefectural relations with the ROK. He pointed to the fact that Shimane and its Korean sister state, North Gyeongsang Province, were continuing grassroots exchanges even after the ordinance came on the books. COMMENT: Technically speaking, sister-state relations were frozen by the North Gyeongsang governor following enactment. The

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province delivered an ultimatum to Shimane: without a repeal of Takeshima Day, prefectural relations would be kept on hold. But what Inoue's comment, and local press reporting, confirm is that two-way academic and cultural exchanges, and even "personal" travel of prefectural and city officials to South Korea to discuss further economic, cultural and political relations, have continued even after the creation of Takeshima Day. END COMMENT.

¶7. (SBU) In addition to media interviews, PR brochures, a month-long Takeshima photo display in the prefectural government building lobby, and prefecture-sponsored TV and magazine messages targeting the run-up to the 22nd, Shimane held a two-hour &Forum to Consider Takeshima.8 Unfortunately, the prefecture did not invite representatives of the ROKG, or anyone with a Korean point of view, for that matter, to any of the events of Takeshima Day. Inoue admitted that the forum was a one-sided event from Shimane,s point of view only, in which the governor, prefectural assembly and citizen representatives participated. RUSSEL